



ASSUMPTION SEMINARY

*Building Faith. Preparing Leaders.*

Assumption Seminary Student Government:  
House Constitution

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## **I. Purpose**

- a.** The purpose of the Assumption Seminary Student Government is to aid in the formation of the men of Assumption Seminary by nurturing the community life. “The essential work of the seminary takes place in the context of community. Personal growth and character development should progress together harmoniously within a deepening spiritual life. The seminary is a school of human virtue, of growth in honesty, integrity, intellectual rigor, hard work, and tolerance. The common good is built with solidarity and discipline—all leavened by humor and healthy enjoyment.”<sup>1</sup> The Assumption Seminary Student Government will achieve this by aiding the formation faculty with all student activities, committees, and in the general areas of life within Assumption Seminary. The Student Government bears a responsibility to the student body. The Student Government listens to the student body's concerns, advocates policies and programs for its benefit, and provides it with opportunities to contribute to and experience the life of the community. The Student Government functions as an advisory body to the Assumption Seminary Faculty and works closely with Formation Faculty to enhance the vibrancy of the Assumption Seminary community. The Student Government works principally through the standing committees of the Assumption Seminary Student Body. The Student Government is funded by student activities fees which are earmarked in tuition collected at the beginning of each academic year.

## **II. Membership**

- a.** The Student Government shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Class Representatives (one from each respective formation class), and the designated Chair of the committees (one chair from each committee). A seminarian may simultaneously hold the seats of a Class Representative and a Committee Chair; this seminarian will still only have one vote in Student Government meetings.
- b.** The President:
  - i.** The President shall be the leader of the Student Government, and therefore shall schedule, convene, and conduct all meetings. He shall set the agenda, approve expenditures within the general Student Government budget categories while overseeing the entire budget, disperse funds, all according to his role in the Finance Council (see section VIII). He shall

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<sup>1</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program for Priestly Formation Fifth Edition* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), no. 260.

also represent the Student Government in public forums and serve as the main mediator between the student body and the Assumption Seminary Faculty. This mediatory role takes place through monthly meetings with the Assumption Seminary Rector. His role is to actively listen to his peers and dutifully discern what proposals are best for the seminary community at large. He may delegate authority/responsibilities to the Vice President, as needs arise.

c. The Vice President:

- i. The Vice President takes on an ancillary role to the office of the President. He is responsible for ensuring that all the members of the Student Government are abiding by the Constitution. He is also responsible for helping the President exercise his duties/responsibilities. He serves as the representative of the President, as delegated. He shall attend all Student Government meetings and be part of the Finance Council (see section VIII). He serves as a contact person with committee chairs to ensure that the committees have what they need to fulfill their duties. When the President is unavailable, the Vice President assumes his office interim.

d. Treasurer:

- i. The Treasurer is responsible for the Student Government Budget, which is comprised of earmarked funds in the student's activities fees collected by Assumption Seminary. The treasurer reports the financial status of every committee and class at every Student Government meeting, or, as necessary. He is part of the Finance Council (see section VIII). The Treasurer works closely with the Assumption Seminary Business Manager to facilitate proper documentation of expenses made by the Student Government. The Treasurer works with each Class Representative and Chair of the committees in order to approve and report expenses. Expenses should be reported to the Treasurer and the Assumption Seminary Business Manager through physical documentation and/or electronic documentation (i.e. e-mail communication). The treasurer is appointed by the President in conjunction with the Vice President.

e. Secretary:

- i. The Secretary of the Student Government is responsible for the minutes of the Student Government meetings, helping publicize the agenda of Student Government meetings, and attending meetings as delegated by the

President. The Secretary reports directly to the President and Vice President, forwarding the minutes of the meeting to both the President and Vice President no more than 3 days after the scheduled meeting (see sections: IV.g; VII.a; VIII.e). He is also part of the Finance Council (see section VIII). The secretary is appointed by the President in conjunction with the Vice President.

f. Class Representative:

- i. The Class Representative is an elected member of each formation class, chosen by the majority of his peers, to be the mediator between the class and the Student Government. He acts as a liaison between his constituents (those in his formation year) and the Student Government to provide suggestions, ideas, concerns, etc. to the Student Government. His role is to actively listen to his peers and dutifully discern what proposals are best for his constituents and the seminary community at large (see sections: IV.c-f; IV.h-j; VI.a; VIII.d-e).

g. Committee Chair:

- i. The Chair of each committee is responsible for being the main liaison between his committee and the Student Government. He provides updates, progress reports, actions, events, and proposals from the committee to the Student Government. His role is to actively listen to his peers within the committee and dutifully discern what proposals are best for the seminary community at large. He works closely with the faculty advisor and finds ways to implement actions approved by the Student Government. He also provides suggestions, ideas, proposals, concerns, etc. to the Student Government on areas concerning his committee (see sections: III; IV.c-f; IV.h; VI; VII; VIII.d-e).

### III. Committees

- a. The Committees of the Assumption Seminary Student Government are:
  - i. Life, Peace, and Justice Committee
  - ii. Liturgy and Spiritual Life Committee
  - iii. Physical Life Committee
  - iv. Social Life Committee
  - v. Social Media Committee

- b. Membership of the committee is based on formation class elections (see section V.e). Each formation class has a representative on each respective committee. Each committee will elect a Chair and Co-Chair (see section: V.f).
- c. Each member, with the exception of the faculty advisor, will have an equal vote on matters brought to vote by the chair of the committee. Members must be present to vote. There will be no substitute representatives or voting by absentee ballot or proxy. When practical, consensus should be the preferred method of decision-making.
- d. The Rector will designate a faculty advisor to each committee. The faculty advisor, a non-voting member of the committee, does not chair the committee but acts as a resource person to the committee, offering advice as necessary.
- e. Proposals for the agenda should be clearly typed and submitted to the appropriate committee prior to the meeting date (two days advance is recommended). The Chair of the committee, of original jurisdiction, aided by the faculty advisor, may assess whether to include the proposal on the agenda or refer it to the Student Government for any further action (see sections: IV.c-f).
- f. Details of each committee, their purpose, responsibilities, and normative practices are found in the Committee Descriptions (see section IX).

#### IV. **Student Government Procedures**

- a. The Student Government shall meet as established on the house Calendar at intervals of every two to three weeks. Additional meetings may be called as necessary. Meetings must have, at minimum, the presence of the President, Vice President, and class representatives.
- b. The Student Government meetings are open to any member of the community for observation. Attendance should be expressed to the President in written form no less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
- c. Any member of the Assumption Seminary community can offer proposals, ideas, concerns, etc. to the Student Government. Proposals can be given to the President, Vice President, Class Representative, or Committee members. Proposals may be given in person during the Student Government meeting with previous express written permission by the President. Proposals are to be given to the appropriate representative. (e.g. Liturgical suggestions should be given to any member of the Liturgy and Spiritual Life Committee.)

- d. Items to be placed on the Student Government agenda should be clearly written, with outlines of major points, and submitted to the President no less than 24 hours to the scheduled meeting.
- e. Proposal Procedure:
  - i. Proposals are to be presented by a voting member of the Student Government, or by any person in the community without prejudice to Section IV.c, during the time allotted them by the President. Once a proposal is given, a vote will be made to approve deliberation on the proposal. If deliberation is approved, then every member of the Student Government may comment. After deliberation, the voting members of the Student Government will either vote in favor or against the proposal. In the case of a tie, the voting members can either re-open deliberation or have the President make the final decision. If required, the proposal may also be sent to the appropriate committee for more discussion, reformulation, and brought back to the Student Government at a later time. Proposals that are approved by the Student Government are presented by the President to the Assumption Seminary Faculty for formal approval and implementation. If approved, the proposal is then given to the committee chair who is charged with speaking with the committee, and the committee faculty advisor, in order to implement the change.
  - f. Proposals that are substantial changes to the seminary life, after approval of a committee or formation class (see section(s): III.c; III.e; VII), must be voted on by the Student Government and then proposed to the Assumption Seminary Faculty. If the proposal is approved by the Assumption Seminary Faculty, it is brought back to the Student Government for implementation if necessary.
  - g. The Secretary of the Student Government is charged with dutifully taking the minutes of the Student Government meetings. This includes, but not limited to, taking attendance, counting votes in favor or against proposals, tracking actions taken (i.e. sending proposals back to a committee for further development or deliberation/implementation), and summarizing reports/comments made throughout the meeting. These meeting minutes will be forwarded to the President and Vice President who sift through, compile, and distribute the minutes at a later time. The minutes should be submitted in no less than three days after the scheduled meeting. Minutes of the Student Government meetings shall be distributed to the members of the Student Government, who then pass on the minutes to their respective constituencies. The meeting minutes must be approved

by the Student Government at the following meeting. This is done by a simple motion, initiated by one voting member, and then seconded by another voting member.

- h. Voting Members:
  - i. President, Vice President, Class Representatives, Committee Chair.
- i. Non-Voting Members:
  - i. Secretary, Treasurer
- j. If, at any time, a Class Representative or Committee Chair is deemed unable of fulfilling his responsibilities, the Student Government may hold a vote to depose the individual from office. This vote must be unanimous among the voting members (excluding the person of whom the vote is concerning) and then must be approved by the Assumption Seminary Rector.

## **V. Student Government Election Procedures**

- a. The elections for the President and Vice-President will be held approximately during the third week of April, two weeks before the end of the academic year. Any member of the community that is not present, i.e. on pastoral year or internship year, will be provided an electronic voting opportunity. At the time of the election, only 3rd Year Theologians and under can be nominated.
- b. The Elections will be presided over by (in order of availability) the previous president, the previous vice president, the previous secretary, the previous treasurer, or a member of IV Theology appointed by the Rector or Vice-Rector.
- c. The Elections will be held as follows:
  - i. There will be nominations for the President and Vice-President, either accepted or declined by the nominees, followed by a vote of all members of the student body present. The nominations will take place one week before the voting occurs. A nomination form will be provided to the community. The Friday following the nomination week, or at another designated time, the President will preside over the voting box during the community lunch. At set time, the student body will be instructed to vote for the next President. Numbered paper ballots will be provided. All votes will be counted at the end of the community lunch and the newly elected



President and Vice-President will be announced. Whomever receives the largest number of votes but amounting to 50% + 1 of the voting body, wins the election and becomes the President. Whomever receives the second largest number of votes is elected as Vice President. If the President does not receive 50% + 1 or more of the votes from the present voting body, then a second round of voting takes place with the top 2 nominees with the highest number of votes. In the event of a runoff, only those present are able to recast a vote, those on pastoral year will have their original vote counted again.

- ii. The President of the Student Government may only be from II Theology, III Theology, or IV Theology and have spent a minimum of a full year as a member of Assumption Seminary Student Body prior to the election.
- iii. No person may serve more than one term as President.
- iv. When someone is elected President, they may not hold any other seat on Student Government, i.e., they may not be both President and Class Representative, nor Committee chair, nor an officer of the Knights of Columbus.
- v. During the second week of the Fall Semester, the nominations and votes for class representatives takes place. Each formation class meets in a separate room and votes on who they would like to be their representative in the Student Government. A simple majority (50% + 1) suffices for election.
- vi. After the formation class representative is elected, each formation class deliberates, nominates, and votes, on individuals to represent their interests for each committee (see sections: III; VIII.d-e). If more than one nominee is suggested, or self-named, for a given committee, the formation class takes a vote and the person with the simple majority (51% or more) is placed on the committee.
- vii. Once the respective formation classes elect their committee representatives, the committee members meet immediately after to vote on a committee chair and co-chair. A committee chair must have spent at least one entire formation year at Assumption Seminary. A simple majority vote suffices.

## VI. **Grievances**

- a. Any student with a grievance concerning the Student Government should submit a written statement to his Class Representative. Written statements may be in hard copy or through electronic correspondence (i.e. e-mail correspondence). The Class Representative will submit the statement to the appropriate Assumption Seminary Faculty member, or to the appropriate party. If a grievance concerns his Class Representative, the grievance should be submitted to either the President or another Class Representative. If the student is not comfortable with presenting the grievance with any of the above members, he may speak to his faculty advisor directly.

## VII. **Rules of Amendment**

- a. Any member of the seminary community may propose amendment(s) to the Assumption Seminary Student Government Constitution. The Assumption Student Government will vote on whether to submit a proposed amendment(s) to the Assumption Formation Faculty for approval. If approved by the Assumption Seminary Faculty, a two-thirds majority vote by the student body is required for the approval of amendment(s). The date of approval for each amendment should be recorded. Amendment(s) will come into effect immediately, unless determined by the Assumption Seminary Faculty that the amendment(s) will come into effect for the following academic year. All amendment(s) made will be promulgated through the Assumption Student Government meeting minutes after the amendment(s) have been accepted.

## VIII. **Finance**

- a. There shall be established a finance council consisting of the current President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. All three shall serve as signatories on the Assumption Seminary Student Government budget. The Treasurer has the primary responsibilities for overseeing the budget (see section: II.d). These responsibilities are, but not limited to: The appropriation of funds for each committee to set their own budget; The appropriation of funds for each respective formation class to set their own budget; The establishing of a budget for the Assumption Seminary Student Government; Allocating resources as needed by the Assumption Seminary Community; Ensuring the transition of the account to the next members of the finance council within fourteen days after general elections.

- b. The working budget for the year for the Student Government will be proposed by the finance council at the first meeting of the academic year and must be accepted by a majority vote of the Student Government.
- c. All expenditures of the finance council must be first accepted by a majority vote of the Student Government unless the expenditure from the Student Government Budget is less than \$20, then all that is required is the approval of the President and Vice-President.
- d. All expenditures of the standing committees and individual formation classes must receive a super-majority vote from the committee members or from the respective formation class unless the expenditure is less than \$100. Any expenditure less than \$100 only requires approval from both the committee Chair and Co-Chair, or from the simple majority of the formation class.
- e. All expenditures of the standing committees and respective formation class must be recorded with the Student Government Treasurer with physical receipts. Any expenditure filed without receipt will not be reimbursed. All expenditures will be present on the next Student Government meeting minutes (see sections: II.d-e; II.g; III.e; IV.g).

**IX. Assumption Seminary Student Government: Committees**

**a. Life, Peace, and Justice Committee**

- i.** Purpose: The Life, Peace, and Justice Committee at Assumption Seminary is dedicated to promoting Catholic Social Teaching through the organization and/or support of events and activities that cultivate social consciousness and formation.
- ii.** Expectations: The Life, Peace, and Justice Committee is expected to cultivate social justice principles within the Assumption Seminary community and to bring those principles to actions. This is done, minimally, by the formulation of two ‘events’ per semester and with frequent committee meetings and collaborates with the other committees as necessary. The committee reports their events, successes, and failures to the Assumption Seminary Student Government.
- iii.** Normative Practices: Participation in 40 Days for Life; Participation in Texas Rally for Life (Austin); Inviting guest speakers; Promoting care for creation; Collaborating with CRS Animators; Organizing trips to the border or service days with Catholic Charities.

**b. Liturgy and Spiritual Life Committee**

- i.** Purpose: The Liturgy and Spiritual Life Committee is ordered to foster greater participation in and love of the mysteries of the faith within the hearts and mind of seminarians at Assumption Seminary.
- ii.** Expectations: The Liturgy and Spiritual Life Committee is expected to enhance opportunities of spiritual and liturgical growth throughout the academic year. The Liturgy Committee reports their events, successes, and failures to the Assumption Seminary Student Government. The head MC and head Sacristan are automatically non-voting members of the committee.
- iii.** Normative Practices: Liturgical prayer; holy hours; stations of the cross; eucharistic vigils; altar de Los Muertos; optional night prayer for the community.

**c. Physical Life Committee**

- i.** Purpose: The Physical Life Committee is ordered to the cultivation of healthy physical recreational activities in the life of the seminary. It provides opportunities for exercise, sports, and other activities in an effort to cultivate healthy and balanced lifestyles while cultivating fraternal community.
- ii.** Expectations: The Physical Life Committee is expected to organize weekly opportunities for the seminarians to engage in physical activity. They will collaborate with nearby parishes to organize the availability of facilities for sporting events. They report their events, successes, and failures to the Assumption Seminary Student Government.
- iii.** Normative Practices: Archbishop's Cup; Rector's Cup; weekly access to facilities for sports.

**d. Social Life Committee**

- i. Purpose: The Social Life Committee is ordered to the fostering of fraternal bonds within the Assumption Seminary community. That is, the purpose is to build strong relationships among seminarians. The Social Life Committee creates an atmosphere of relaxation and recreation to assist in the building up of the human pillar of formation.
- ii. Expectations: The Social Life Committee is expected to foster human connection through merriment. This is done through multiple social events throughout the academic year. The committee meets frequently and collaborates with the other committees as necessary. The committee reports their events, successes, and failures to the Assumption Seminary Student Government.
- iii. Normative Practices: Birthday celebrations; game nights; movie nights; poker night; Archbishop's Cup social; Oktoberfest; Mexican Independence Day; Rectors Cup social; annual despedida.

**e. Social Media Committee**

- i. Purpose: The Social Media Committee is ordered to the promotion of the seminary community through various modes of communication in a bi-lingual, multi-cultural manner. The committee produces content that promotes the seminary and has a particular responsibility for promoting vocations.
- ii. Expectations: The Social Media Committee is expected to offer opportunities for people on social media to access a glimpse of the life in the seminary community. They do so by promoting seminary events and offering bi-lingual digital coverage at community events in collaboration with the other committees.
- iii. Normative Practices: Photos at communal events; update social media sites; advertisements; live streaming; interviews; videos.